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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine women's realization toward the quality of life, identifying their status aspirations. The study's primary purpose was to achieve a better understanding of how undergraduate women of Guam and Japan would aspire to their academic and social goals and how they would become aware of their gender equality. The secondary purpose was to achieve an understanding of how the life course selection of undergraduate women would be associated with the realized status aspirations. The focus of the study was on formulating a statistical profile of women of two different settings. Although Guam and Japan are geographically close, the mind set and culture of the people are quite distant. In particular because it is an important military site, Guam has mirrored the U.S. government and institutional models to become Americanized. Even though modern day Japan was founded on a plan developed by the U.S. military, Japanese culture has been strong and venerable. The survey instrument was developed and reviewed to have content validity, and pilot-tested on undergraduate women to ascertain student aspirations and awareness. Subjects, 111 Guamanian university women and 131 Japanese university women, were surveyed. Findings suggest that both groups of women are more likely to go to college soon after finishing high school and to graduate from a university in four years. Both the Guamanian and Japanese women are willing to achieve a sense of self-worth and self-satisfaction through working and earning income and show a similar preference regarding the life course selection, in spite of their different characteristics. However, the findings of this sample also suggest that Japanese professional women perceive higher gender discrimination in promotion and than do Guamanian women. A large number of Guam undergraduate women had part time jobs and many of them had children regardless of their marital status. By contrast, most of the Japanese undergraduate women were full time students and were not married yet. For Guamanian women such actions as getting married in their 20s or 30s and having a child contributed to life course selection, and for Japanese women such actions as having a profitable job and becoming a mentor for the next generation contributed to the selection. Contains 6 tables of data, 42 references, and 3 figures. (BT)

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# Undergraduate Women's Gender Awareness and Status Aspirations

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# Undergraduate Women's Gender Awareness and Status Aspirations

## Selecting Guam and Japan as Sites for Research

Guam is an island society comprised of diverse ethnic elements which draws its strength from Asian, American, and European sources, though the Chamorros (the indigenous people of Guam) still constitute the largest group and still control the political structure of the government of Guam. At 209 square miles Guam is the largest island in Micronesia. Guam (an unincorporated territory of the United States since 1898) lies about 1,550 miles south of Japan and more than 3,700 miles southwest of Hawaii (see Appendix A). 133,152 people reside in Guam (National Data Book, 1998) and the population density is greater than any state in the United States (Souder-Jaffery and Underwood 1987). Although English (official language) is spoken throughout the island, the indigenous people still speak their own Chamorro language. Guam is a frontier border between Asia and America where the peoples, politics, and economics of these countries have met and have mixed and where global immigrations have met domestic migrations (Nomura 1996). The colonization of the western Pacific over the past four hundred years by Spain, Germany, Japan, and finally America brought social, cultural, and linguistical problems (Goetzfridt and Goniwiecha 1989); since the end of World War II, the United States obtained political dominion over Micronesia as a whole and Guam in particular. Like the social environment of Guam, the culture of the Chamorro people does represent a unique blend of multicultural influence, both indigenous and foreign (Twaddle, Roberto, and Quintanilla 1998). In addition to Chamorros and "stateside" Americans, the University of Guam (UOG) has large student populations of Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans, and Pacific islanders from Truk, Palau, the Marshall Islands, as well as the Federated States of Micronesia (comprised of Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, and Kosrae). UOG, which is a U.S. university established in 1952, is not only the major institution of higher education in the western Pacific but it also the only four-year post-secondary institution in Micronesia. UOG is a regional learning center and students exchange their ideas in its culturally rich environment.

More and more, Chamorro women have to prepare themselves for the world, not just to be a homemaker but to face the world as a bread winner and ultimately to take care of their own families (Souder 1992). In the Guam history of more than 2,000 years, Chamorro women exercised great influence in all matters related to family life and property management yet no longer enjoyed the

independence and authority which they were accustomed to in precontact culture (Souder 1977). In Souder's (1977) words, however, no pure Chamorros ("who were of Malaysian decent having migrated to the Marianas from Southeast Asia beginning at least 3,500 years ago," Twaddle et al. 1998, p. 3) existed by the end of the 19th century, and intermarriage with the Spanish, Mexican, Filipino, Orientals, and other Europeans eventually resulted in the creation of new breed called the "Guamanian." As Guam becomes more modern, the Chamorro culture is disappearing. In brief, the contemporary Chamorro culture is a Chamorro reconstruction of American social practices, encompassing Chamorro adaptations of Spanish traditions (Twaddle et al. 1998). Guam presents a unique and important area of ethnic identity research, and the diverse student population of UOG creates the perfect setting for research on status aspirations from multicultural perspectives.

As regards Japan, the dominant ethnic group is the Japanese; yet the largest minority group is the Koreans, who began settling in Japan during the 1920s and have retained their language and culture, constituting 0.6 percent of the total population. Just as women comprise the majority of students in American colleges and universities, so the number of female students in Japanese institutions of higher education is increasing (Imada 1998). Yet the majority of women go to junior colleges and more than 90 percent of men go to four-year universities (Teichler 1997); the junior college system absorbs 21 percent of all the post-seçondary enrollment and predominately for women (Hayhoe 1995). Graduate education in Japan was undertaken on a very small scale and are currently being expanded, principally in the national universities (Arimoto 1997). As maintained by Hayhoe (1995), persistent vestiges of a Confucian norm requiring that a woman obey her father, husband, and son have created particular difficulties for women in East Asia. It seems clear that American women are more career-oriented and Japanese women are more home-oriented. Japanese women's such attitude, interestingly enough, has not greatly changed even after obtaining a college education: as an example, of 735 undergraduate women who answered the survey questionnaire, 529 women (72%) said that they would like to quit their full-time jobs when they got married or had a child (Inoue 1991). It would be extremely difficult for the woman to be reemployed on a full-time basis once she left to rear a family. Also, since 1992, college graduates in Japan have been facing growing employment problems (Teichler 1997). American women, who have a desire for family and career, will try not to give up either one of them. By contrast, Japanese women, who have a desire for family and career, will try to give up one of them.

## Review of the Literature

Throughout American social history, one of the strongest beliefs has been that the more education people have, the better their chances for economic and occupational attainment are. Educational structure in the United States is so closely intertwined with the occupational structure that it is almost impossible to discuss one without discussing the other (Woelfel, cited in Inoue 1999). The direct correlation between educational attainment (the higher the degrees attained by persons) and labor outcomes (the greater their earning, and occupational status and prestige) has been established (Hadden 1996; Robles 1997). It is also important to note that aspiration (or ambition) is not necessarily a determinate factor of the future attainment but is potentially useful for the following reasons (Gottfredson and Becker, cited in Rojewski 1996): (1) status aspirations of young people tend to represent the orientation to their particular educational and occupational attainment, (2) educational aspirations of young people on occupational aspirations tend to have direct bearing on their eventual occupational attainment, and (3) status aspirations of young people tend to play an active role in determining whether they pursue or ignore educational opportunities available to them. Social status is a term used to describe the position of an individual or a group in the hierarchical social stratification (Orr 1995), and the status attainment process is a set of events by which individuals come to occupy their positions in social hierarchies of wealth, power, and prestige (Haller and Portes 1973): these three events are viewed as a set of basic social status dimensions. Social status is usually measured by education, occupation, and income in the social structure of industrial societies (Blau 1975). When status systems of modern industrial societies are crystallized, the individual's occupation tends to intimately be connected with his or her position in other hierarchies (Haller and Portes 1973). In Haller and Portes's words, occupational status does not exhaust the range of status variations but does appear as the most representative summary measure of the individual's social standing within the context of the modern industrial societies; the relationship of occupational status to the specific status dimensions is not only evident but also pronounced, with educational attainment being regarded as primarily a determinant and with economic attainment as primarily a consequence of occupational attainment.

Unlike many other countries in the world, America has higher participation rates for women than for men in higher education and women are more likely than men to complete bachelor's

degrees (Bank 1995). Women comprise more than half of the degree recipients at all levels of today's American higher education, except for the doctoral level (Adelman 1992). While the number of bachelor's and graduate degrees earned by women between the academic years of 1975-1976 and 1985-1986 rose 16 percent, men experienced a six percent decline in attaining those degrees (American Council on Education 1989). Educational aspirations of American women have changed with dramatic increases in the number of women aspiring to graduate degrees (Adelman 1992; Roos and Jones 1993; Townsend and Mason 1990); in fact, the graduate school enrollment of women has been increasing faster than that of men in this country (Syverson and Welch 1993). Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibited gender discrimination in federal educational programs. This legislation mandating equal opportunities for women was needed to overcome the segregation that had typified American educational stratification, inhibiting women's access to more prestigious and profitable occupations. Without the requisite educational attainment, women would still be denied entry into higher status occupations dominantly held by men (Ethington, Smart, and Pascarella 1991). Thus Title IX has served its purpose in opening educational and occupational doors to American women and Guamanian women as well.

Equality between men and women has been a basic idea of activities of the United Nations, such as the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Illumination of Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The idea to the effect that maintaining world peace can be accomplished by the spreading of a democratic equalitarian society, in which no discrimination is made because of race, creed, or sex, has been running through the history of the United Nations. In a broad sense, the term "gender equality" includes social, legal, economic, religious, and political equality between the female and male halves of humanity, yet it goes beyond equality of opportunity (Eisler 1995). In this study, nevertheless, gender equally was focused on equal opportunity and treatment in employment (recruitment and selection, placement, promotion, wages, job content, training and education, and retirement). Although most undergraduate men and women seem to believe that gender discrimination at workplaces and its causes are things of the past and that gender inequality has been "solved," there is substantial evidence that women continue to lag behind their male counterparts in the workplace of today (DeLaat 1999). For instance, a cross-sectional research by Knoke and Ishio (1998) found that the women's job training disadvantages widened after controlling for theoretically important human capital,

occupational, industrial, organizational, and family-stage variables, and they concluded that the gender gap in company job training remains far more robust and tenacious.

Japan is known as one of the world's industrial and trading nations and the first Asian country to develop a technologically advanced industrial economy but is not known the fact that the Law of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment (Equal Opportunity Law), which did not come into force until 1986, has not yet had a great effect on working women's situations. In the 1997 Equal Opportunity Law was revised and finally, more than ten years later, the law that met the international standards was established; the new legislation prohibits discrimination at all stages of the employment management process, from recruitment, employment until retirement. Finally, Japan has become a society which prohibits all kinds of discrimination between men and women. In recent years more and more Japanese women have begun working in the business world, yet most are secretaries, clerical workers, and sales women. Statistics reveal that the mother who works, at least on a part-time basis, is a reality in Japan; that is, on the conceptual level, the working woman has not yet entered the national consciousness.

A woman's occupational career is the series of occupations that she experiences through life. The most outstanding feature of female occupational careers is that such careers are influenced strongly by life events, such as marriage, childbirth, child-rearing, and release from child-rearing (NIEVR 1989). For women, being single and employed is quite distinct from being a mother of three children and employed (Liao 1995). Such events also greatly affect the occupational careers of male workers, but females are more likely than males to lose promotions because of marriage and childbirth that play the role of an important motive. Thus the interaction between occupational careers and life events, as noted by NIEVR (1989), is not peculiar to women because the problems of female occupational careers are centered on entrance to and retirement from the labor market and those transfers and other occupational changes are strongly influenced by life events.

## Purpose of the Study

This study was an attempt to determine women's realization toward the quality of life, identifying their status aspirations. Over the past two decades, as noted by Eisler (1995), it has become increasingly apparent to those concerned with the global situation from a perspective sensitive to women's needs and rights that the degree to which women are accorded status equal to

that of men has much to do with the quality of life throughout the world. Therefore, the primary purpose of the study was to achieve a better understanding of how undergraduate women of Guam and Japan would aspire their academic and social goals and how they would aware of their gender equality. The secondary purpose of the study was to achieve a better understanding of how the life course selection of undergraduate women of Guam and Japan would be associated with the realized status aspirations. Accordingly, the principal research questions were as follow: (1) Do significant differences exist between Guamanian and Japanese undergraduate women in their status aspirations and gender awareness? (2) Do significant differences exist between Guamanian and Japanese undergraduate women in their life course selection? In particular, (3) are undergraduate women's status aspirations and gender awareness associated with the life course selection?

The focus of the study was thus on formulating a statistical profile of women of two different settings. As a group, Guamanian undergraduate women, who live today in the American tradition but have as their inheritance both Chamorro and Hispanic traditions (Spanish colonization: 1668-1898) would show common patterns of status aspirations and gender awareness. Japanese counterparts live in the so-called monocultural environment and are homogeneous in terms of age, socioeconomic backgrounds, and expectations. Japan has experienced its agricultural, industrial, and information ages, but Guam has never experienced its industrial age (Note: Guam's two main sources of revenue are military spending and tourism). It should be noted that this study originally focused on Guamanian women, yet a comparison of Guamanian women with Japanese women would be quite interesting from various points of view. For instance, although Guam and Japan are geographically close, the mind set and culture of the people are quite distant. In particular, because it is an important military site, Guam has mirrored the U.S. government and institutional models to become Americanized. Even though modern day Japan was founded on a plan developed by the U.S. military, Japanese culture has been strong and venerable.

## Method

Survey instrument was developed and reviewed by the faculty to have content validity (the extent to which it provides adequate coverage of the topic); it was pilot-tested on undergraduate women at UOG to ascertain student aspirations and awareness. The six-paged questionnaire consisted of five sections: status aspirations (29 items), gender discrimination in employment (15

items), self-evaluation (8 items), life course selection (1 item), and demographic information (such as the participant's age, ethnicity, native language, and the parents' education and occupation) (13 items). The participants were asked to rate each item on the Likert scale (5 = of utmost important, 4 = very important, 3 = of moderate important, 2 = of little important, 1 = not important at all). This scale was chosen because of the suitability for the respondent-centered study; thus how responses differed between people as well as between various stimuli were investigated.

A sample of 350 women was randomly selected based on an alphabetical listing of the Admissions Office of UOG (1,374 men; 2,146 women). The number of women (61%) is larger by far than that of men (39%), though one of the reasons for this phenomenon is that Chamorro families tend to send their sons rather than daughters to the U.S. mainland universities. The intended population for Guamanians was the entire undergraduate women enrolled both in degree programs within all the five colleges (Agriculture and Life Sciences; Arts and Sciences; Business and Public Administration; Education; Nursing and Health Sciences) and in non-degree programs offered by UOG during the 1998 spring semester. A copy of the survey with an explanatory letter and a stamped envelop was mailed to each of the participants. The usable response rate for Guamanians was approximately 32 percent and it was considered that the sample size (n = 111) would be adequate for research of this nature. In case of the Japanese women, the survey was conducted at two universities: (1) Tokiwa University which had two colleges (Human Sciences; Applied International Studies) with the total of 2,562 students (51.4% male; 48.6% female) and (2) Josai University which had three colleges (Economics and Business; Sciences; Pharmaceutical Science) with the total of 9,532 students (83% male; 17% female). One faculty member from each university agreed to serve as a contact person and received a packet containing an explanatory letter, guidelines for administering the survey, and copies of the questionnaire during the 1998 fall semester. The total of 131 responses were collected: 44 from Josai University and 87 from Tokiwa University. The sample size of Japanese women (n = 131), although it was not based on the probability sampling, was fairly matched to that of Guamanian women.

***Data Analysis***

This was an exploratory study and any specific hypothesis was not established. All null hypotheses assumed that there would be no difference between the two groups. To answer to the first question, the relative importance of status aspirations and gender awareness for Guamanian

and Japanese undergraduate women was identified. In prioritizing aspirations and awareness, the overall means and standard deviations for all the respondents by each item were calculated and arranged in descending order. In comparing Guamanian and Japanese women, *t* tests were used to determine the significant differences for each of the individual items between the two groups. The study further investigated the association of ethnicity (Guamanian versus Japanese) with the life course selection: first, *t* test was used to examine the significant difference between Guamanian and Japanese women in the life course selection (the second question); then, multiple regression analyses were used to evaluate the association of status aspirations with the life course selection for each group (the third question). An alpha level of .05 was used for all the statistical tests.

## Results

Since the late 1970s, American colleges and universities have been experiencing an onslaught of nontraditional aged (25 years old or older) students (Bowden 1995; Green 1996). As seen Table 1, the majority of Japanese women of this sample (89.3%) were traditional aged students. In case of Guamanian women, 40.5 percent of them were traditional aged students (24 years old or younger). By the year 2000, the number of 18 year old is expected to decline by a half million and, therefore, Japanese institutions will have to recruit nontraditional students in order to maintain the enrollment, just as schools in the United States (Mitsui 1995). All the women of the Japanese sample (100%) were not married and had no children, whereas Guamanian women were likely to become a single mother (26.1% of women were married, yet 36% had a child).

**Table 1**
**Demographic Data for the Guamanian and Japanese Women**

| | | Guam ( n = 111) | | Japan ( n = 131) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age**: | 21 or under | 45 | (40.5%) | 117 | (89.3%) |
| | 22-24 | 29 | (26.1%) | 12 | ( 9.2%) |
| | 25-27 | 12 | (10.8%) | 2 | ( 1.5%) |
| | 28-30 | 4 | ( 3.6%) | 0 | ( 0.0%) |
| | 31 or over | 21 | (18.9%) | 0 | ( 0.0%) |
| **Marital Status**: | Married | 29 | (26.1%) | 0 | ( 0.0%) |
| | Not married | 82 | (73.9%) | 131 | (100.0%) |
| **Children:** | Have children | 40 | (36.0%) | 0 | ( 0.0%) |
| | No children | 71 | (64.0%) | 131 | (100.0%) |

**Priorities of Status Aspirations**

The participants used a 5-point Likert scale for their answers to aspiration items, such as "How important is (was) it for you to graduate from a university?" The overall mean scores and standard deviations for all the respondents by all the items of aspirations were calculated and arranged in descending order. The reliability coefficient alpha across all the 29 aspiration items for Guamanian women was .8677 and for Japanese women was .8750. For Guamanian women, the three top aspirations were (1) to graduate from a university (M = 4.68, SD = .63), (2) to become financially independent (M = 4.47, SD = .77), and (3) to achieve work satisfaction (M = 4.43, SD = .72). For Japanese women the three top aspirations were (1) to become financially independent (M = 4.31, SD = .87), (2) to graduate from a university for family (M = 4.05, SD = 1.02), and (3) to achieve work satisfaction (M = 4.00, SD = .94). Table 2 shows the ten top priorities for the two groups and there are fairly good agreements on the relative importance of aspiration priorities for the two groups. Interestingly enough, achieving work satisfaction is the third priority for both Guamanian and Japanese women.

**Table 2**
**Differences in Aspiration Priorities between the Guamanian and Japanese Women**

| Rank | Guamanian Women | Rank | Japanese Women |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | University graduation | 1 | Financially independent |
| 2 | Financially independent | 2 | University graduation (for family) |
| 3 | Achieving work satisfaction | 3 | Achieving work satisfaction |
| 4 | University graduation (for family) | 4 | Financially independent (for family) |
| 5 | Combining work and home | 5 | University graduation |
| 6 | Having career and family | 6 | Choosing friends in social life |
| 7 | Having a child | 7 | Contribution to society |
| 7 | Having profitable job | 8 | Combining work and home |
| 9 | Financially independent (for family) | 9 | Entering into the business world |
| 9 | Contribution to society | 9 | Having career and family |

The means of all the items except six items, as seen in Table 3, were significantly different between the Guamanian and Japanese women. Guamanian women aspired to most of the items much higher than did Japanese women, for instance, (1) to graduate from a university, $t(204) = 7.04$, $p = .000$, (2) to go to graduate school (maser's program), $t(236.42)$, $p = .000$, (3) to have a prestigious occupation, $t(229.47)$, $p = .000$, (4) to have a profitable job, $t(239.35) = 6.82$, $p = .000$, and (5) to have and raise own child, $t(237.60) = 4.87$, $p = .000$.

**Table 3**
**Status Aspirations: Guamanian Versus Japanese Women**

| Aspiration Description | *Guam* (n = 111) M | SD | *Japan* (n = 131) M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| to graduate from a university | 4.68* | .63 | 3.91* | .99 |
| to graduate from a university for your family | 4.27 | .94 | 4.05 | 1.02 |
| to go to professional school | 3.23* | 1.15 | 2.78* | 1.13 |
| to graduate school (master's program) | 3.76* | 1.06 | 2.45* | 1.11 |
| to go to graduate school (doctor's program) | 3.12* | 1.17 | 2.22* | .96 |
| to become financially independent | 4.47 | .77 | 4.31 | .87 |
| to become financially independent for your family | 4.00 | 1.03 | 3.96 | 1.03 |
| to have a socially prestigious occupation | 3.80* | 1.14 | 2.88* | 1.08 |
| to have a profitable job (not necessary prestigious) | 4.01* | .88 | 3.19* | .99 |
| to get married in your 20s or early 30s | 3.21 | 1.27 | 3.22 | 1.18 |
| to have and raise your own child | 4.02* | 1.11 | 3.30* | 1.19 |
| to combine two roles: home and work | 4.05* | .99 | 3.50* | 1.10 |
| to attain a position of great influence at a workplace | 3.77* | 1.09 | 3.13* | .96 |
| to contribute to society through working | 4.00* | .91 | 3.63* | .95 |
| to achieve self-satisfaction through working | 4.43* | .72 | 4.00* | .94 |
| to marry a man with a high social standing | 2.75 | 1.22 | 2.80 | 1.05 |
| to marry a man with a high social standing for your family | 2.84 | 1.21 | 3.05 | 1.08 |
| to have both a family and a career at the same time | 4.02* | 1.04 | 3.31* | .98 |
| to you that your child goes to a prestigious university | 3.57* | 1.21 | 2.73* | 1.02 |
| to be involved in the government and politics | 2.58* | 1.06 | 2.30* | .97 |
| to enter into the business world | 2.96* | 1.18 | 3.31* | 1.01 |
| to enter into the academic world | 3.62* | 1.02 | 2.37* | .99 |
| to work in the area of social welfare or health care | 3.24* | 1.22 | 2.84* | 1.10 |
| to engage in your church affairs | 3.16* | 1.01 | 2.63* | 1.07 |
| to make a connection to improve your social standing | 3.42 | 1.08 | 3.19 | 1.07 |
| to choose friends with whom you associate | 3.50* | 1.05 | 3.84* | 1.13 |
| to attain status dimensions (wealth, power, prestige) | 3.25* | 1.15 | 2.74* | 1.03 |
| to become a mentor for the next generation | 3.88* | 1.01 | 2.63* | 1.07 |
| to become socially important in your life | 3.16* | 1.04 | 2.75* | 1.20 |

*$p < .05$

### Priorities of Gender Awareness

Using a 5-point Likert scale, women answered questions regarding gender discrimination in employment and women's achievement at workplaces. The reliability coefficient alpha across the seven gender equality items for Guamanian women was .8871 and for Japanese women was .9294. The overall mean scores and standard deviations for all the respondents by all the items were calculated and arranged in descending order. The highest perceived gender discrimination for Guamanian women was recruitment and selection (M = 3.73, SD = 1.05) compared to promotion

(M = 3.93, SD = 1.19) for Japanese women. Regarding gender discrimination, two differences were statistically significant between the two groups: promotion, $t(235.83)$, $p = .047$; and retirement, $t(238.59)$, $p = .000$: Japanese women were more likely than Guamanian women to perceive a higher gender discrimination in promotion and retirement (see Table 4). 735 Japanese undergraduate women responded in the previous study and most frequently occurring response was job content (26%), the second one was promotion (21%), the third ones were recruitment and selection (18%) and placement (18%), and the least frequently occurring response was retirement (Inoue 1991). Regarding women's achievement, five factors were significantly different between the two groups: Japanese women perceived such factors as (1) driving the view (men at work and women at home) and (2) child-care and reemployment systems were important, whereas Guamanian women perceived such factors as (1) improving equal opportunity in employment, (2) advancement of women's access to high status occupations, and (3) improving women's educational opportunities for professional field are determinate.

**Table 4**
**Gender Awareness: Guamanian Versus Japanese Women**

| *Item* | *Guam* n = 111 M | SD | *Japan* n = 131 M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender Discrimination: | | | | |
| Recruitment and selection | 3.73 | .92 | 3.77 | 1.21 |
| Placement | 3.68 | .88 | 3.76 | 1.13 |
| Job content | 3.55 | 1.01 | 3.79 | 1.16 |
| Training and education | 3.14 | 1.04 | 3.11 | 1.09 |
| Wages | 3.61 | 1.17 | 3.74 | 1.21 |
| Promotion | 3.63* | 1.15 | 3.93* | 1.19 |
| Retirement | 3.09* | 1.05 | 3.61* | 1.15 |
| What should be done for women's achievement at workplaces? | | | | |
| Expansion of day-care centers and nursing homes | 3.72* | 1.16 | 4.06* | .93 |
| Driving off the view: Men at work, women at home | 3.65 | 1.42 | 3.84 | 1.23 |
| Advancement of child-care leave and reemployment systems for women | 3.91* | 1.02 | 4.27* | .97 |
| Improving equal-opportunity-employment in general | 4.41* | .84 | 4.10* | .88 |
| Men's understanding and cooperation at home and at work | 4.45 | .77 | 4.45 | .83 |
| Advancement of women's access to high status occupations | 4.32* | .88 | 4.10* | .88 |
| Improving educational opportunities for women in professional fields | 4.36* | .94 | 4.08* | .87 |
| Increasing women's work consciousness and the importance of hard work | 4.21 | .93 | 3.97 | .97 |

*$p < .05$

**Occupational Aspiration**

Women were also asked what kinds of job they would like to have after graduating from a university. Their aspired occupations were divided into the six categories: teaching (from kindergarten to high school levels), professional (such as doctors, lawyers, and certified public accountants), business (work for banks or stockbrokerage firms, for example), nursing and health care (including social work), homemaker (stay at home without having a job), and others (including working for the Guam government). The most frequently occurring response for Guamanian women was teaching (29.7%) and perhaps it is natural since 31.5 percent of Guamanian women of this sample were majoring education. The second most frequently occurring ones are business (16.2%), professional (16.2%), and nursing (16.2%). Their occupational aspirations are very much reflected to their university majors. The most frequently occurring category for Japanese women was business (22.1%), probably because many women of this sample were majoring business. "Japanese women have begun to major in nontraditional fields, such as economic, commerce, law, and business management which link more directly to career prospects" (Matsui 1995, p. 19)). Along with an increase that paralleled the "feminization" of college business majors, the proportion of female managers jumped from 19 to 31 percent in the 1970s and then to 43 percent of the middle of the 1990s in America ("Equality between" 1997). Such feminization might be reflected to the college business major of this sample of women.

**The Life Course Selection**

Women were asked the question: "If you are given the five alternatives in the life course selection, which one would you like to choose?" The five alternatives are illustrated below. The majority of both Guamanian women (46%) and Japanese women (47.3%) selected the alternative 4: they would like not to quit their full-time job, even though they had a child (see Table 5). Their second selection for both Guamanian (18.0%) and Japanese (25.2%) women was the alternative 3: they would like to quit their full-time job when they had a child yet to be reemployed later on. Basically, both groups of women showed a similar preference regrading the life course selection, in spite of their different characteristics (for example, a large number of Guam undergraduate women had part-time jobs and many of them had children regardless of their marital status). By contrast, most of the Japanese undergraduate women were full-time students and were not married.

***The Life Course Selection Alternatives***

1: Finish university, get married, and have child (thus stay at home and concentrate on household)
2: Finish university, work full time, get married, and quit job when have child and not be reemployed later on
3: Finish university, work full time, get married, quit job when have child yet be reemployed later on
4: Finish university, work full time, get married, and have child yet do not quit job
5: Finish university, work full time, and do not care about marriage and continue to pursue career
Others (please specify):

**Table 5**
**Percentages of the Guamanian and Japanese Women in the Life-Course Selection**

| *Category* | *Guamanian women* | | *Japanese women* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alternative 1 | 3 | 2.7% | 4 | 3.1% |
| Alternative 2 | 3 | 2.7% | 16 | 12.2% |
| Alternative 3 | 20 | 18.0% | 33 | 25.2% |
| Alternative 4 | 51 | 45.9% | 62 | 47.3% |
| Alternative 5 | 15 | 13.5% | 9 | 6.9% |
| Other | 19 | 17.1% | 7 | 5.3% |
| Total | n = 111 | 100.0% | n = 131 | 100.0% |

Note. Categories are coded: alternative 1 = 1, alternative 2 = 2, alternative 3 = 3, alternative 4 = 4, alternative 5 = 5

## Statistical Tests

The principal questions for statistical tests were as follows: (1) Does a significant difference exist in the life course selection between Guamanian and Japanese women? And (2) what aspiration items are associated with the life course selection for Guamanian and Japanese women?

***t test analysis.*** For the first question, as seen in Table 6, an independent *t* test found that there was no significant difference between the means of the two groups, $t(240), = -.72, p > .05$.

**Table 6**
**Guamanian Versus Japanese Women in the Life-Course Selection**

| Ethnicity | M | SD | t |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guam | 3.14 | 1.64 | -.72 |
| Japan | 3.27 | 1.19 | |

***Multiple regression analysis.*** Multiple regression analysis was conducted to find variables that significantly influence the life course selection. Surprisingly, for Guamanian women only two variables (to get married in their 20s or early 30s, beta = -.328; to have own child, beta = -.306 ) met the entry requirement to be included in the equation but other 27 variables did not meet

at the .05 level of significance. The multiple R shows a moderate correlation (r = .707) between aspirations and the life course selection. The R-Square indicates that 49.99 percent of the variance in the course selection is explained by the predictors. For Japanese women only three variables (to have a profitable job, beta = -223; to get married in their 20s or early 30s, beta = -.347; to become a mentor, beta = -.262) met the entry requirement to be included in the equation but other 26 variables did not meet at the alpha level of .05. The multiple R shows a moderate correlation (r = .665) between status aspirations and life-course selection. The R-Square indicates that 44.21 percent of the variance in the course selection is explained by status aspirations.

## Discussion

### Academic and Social Aspirations

People work, in Lefrancois's (1999) words, for three reasons: economical (making a living), social (interaction with others), and psychological (self-esteem) reasons. It does appear that both Guamanian and Japanese women of this sample are willing to achieve a sense of self-worth and self-satisfaction through working and earning own income, supporting the finding by Ryker (cited in Dio 1996) that female college students placed a higher value priority on equality and self-respect, whereas male college students were found to place a higher value priority on a comfortable life and social recognition. Dio has further noted that these gender differences reflect the differential socialization of men and women in western industrialized societies where men have traditionally been the breadwinners and women have traditionally been the care givers. College education is regarded as the process to actualize the potentiality, identifying the core self-image. As emphasized in Erikson's stage theory of the lifespan human development, college education should be a stage of pulling up old roots and setting down new ones, yet adolescence of Americans seems to continue to around thirty years old because a larger number of students cannot graduate from a university in four years for a variety of reasons. In this regard, especially undergraduate women of Guam have a strong desire to graduate from a university and to become financially independent. They are also willing to achieve identify (understanding and becoming comfortable with one's sexuality, and vocational direction) through college experiences.

"At the age of twenty, Japanese women have not yet discovered the realities of the adult world and respond only to a vague conception of what they are and should be" (Board 1988, p. 5). It is

fair to say that American women (and Guamanian) women at the age of twenty are much more mature than their Japanese counterparts, resulting in more independence emotionally and socially; however, career-minded women are increasing in Japan. Accordingly, Japanese college and university are likely to change their curriculums to accommodate the needs of more career-oriented courses on management, business, and information sciences (Matsui 1995). The luxury of homogeneity in college students population will be no longer exist in Japan too, and institutions of higher education have to provide career-mined female students with curriculums which link more directly to the labor market; the severe shortage of young workers is now forcing business firms to teat female college graduates as part of the regular work force (Arimoto 1997).

The college experience is a lengthy and often fragmented process occurring at various stages in an American individual's life. Both Guamanian and Japanese women are more likely than undergraduate women of the U.S. mainland to go on to college soon after finishing high school and to graduate from a university in four years. As revealed by this study, Guamanian women have higher educational aspirations and this might be associated with "a strong sense of family loyalty which spreads beyond the nuclear family of parents and children . . . . Each Chamorro has many people to whom he can look for help and support [including educational attainment]" (Ballendorf 1993, p. 52). This extended kinship system is a distinct human culture of Guam and the system influences academic and social goals of women and girls, too. Japanese women feel their obligation to their family (especially to their parents) to graduate from a university, mainly because most of them are getting financial support for their higher education (thus their second priority is to become financially independent for family and the fourth is to graduate from a university for family). Similarly, Guamanian women also feel their obligation to graduate a university to their family (extended family). It may be true that Guamanian women are more likely than Japanese women to perceive that higher education is not an option but a must.

Social status is measured by educational attainment, occupational attainment, and income power (Blau 1975). In this regard, Guamanian women's aspirations are considerably high: "to graduate from a university" (M = 4.68); "to have a profitable job (to make a lot of money)" (M = 4.01); and "to have a prestigious occupation (M = 3.80) compared to Japanese women: "to graduate from a university" (M = 3.91); "to have a profitable job" (M = 2.88); and "to have a prestigious occupation" (M = 3.19). And these differences are statistically significant. Are these

mean scores indications that Guamanian women wish "to stand on their own feet"? Women tend to long for something external that will change their lives, resulting in their fear of independence. Are women of this sample taught to become independent at home or at school? If women are not taught until college to become independent, including gender equality, it is probably too late. Guamanian women wish to have a child (M =4.02), which must be rooted in Guam's historical matrilineal societies, though women have been historically identified with the domestic domain of home and family, and which must be also related to the present condition that it is relatively socially acceptable for women to take their infants or young children to their workplaces in Guam. Japanese women do not desire particularly to have a child (M = 3.30), simply because they know that it is very difficult for women to combine work and home, even though the 1985 Equal Opportunity Law has opened career opportunities to Japanese women and the government has declared its intention to realize a society for equality and cooperation between sexes.

**Gender Awareness and the Life Course Selection**

Guamanian women's perceived gender discrimination in employment is not extremely high; perhaps, that currently many of the Chamorro women hold high positions in their societies might be the explanation. Historically, "In the Chamorro society, a matrilineal system gave strong support to the Chamorro women's influence and power in matters of the home and family" (Souder 1977, p. 14). Women's influence and power may have been extended to workplaces in the peculiar climate of Guam from generation to generation. Furthermore, Guam has never experienced its industrial age and Chamorro women have never experienced how strongly occupational careers are influenced by childbirth, and child-rearing. Regarding the perceived gender discrimination, two areas (promotion and retirement) are significantly different between the two groups. That Japanese women perceive higher gender discrimination in these two areas than do Guamanian women might be an indication of one aspect of Japan: women have no real power in the male-oriented society, yet women are relatively free of the pressures that men endure and seem to be quite content to remain economically dependent on, and subservient to, their spouses.

Interestingly enough, when women were asked what should be done for women's continuing achievement at workplaces, the determinate factor for both groups was "men's understanding and cooperation at home and at work" and the mean score for both groups was exactly the same (M = 4.45), reflecting the finding by Bianchi (1996) that American women of the late 1990s continue to

perform more household tasks than men and balance between care giving and bread earing roles. By the same way, the least determinate factor was "driving off the view that men at work and women at home" for both Guamanian (M = 3.65) and Japanese (M = 3.84) women. These results also reflect the reality of the society. In a sense, however, Guam is a society for equality and cooperation between both genders; for example, educational and occupational aspirations of women are as high as those of men, and undergraduate women major in the fields which were traditionally dominated by men, such as business, finance, and management. Time has changed the situation in Japan; the view that a woman's place is her kitchen is becoming a historical relic. The trend that "female workers are expected to quit and marry after working a few years" (Amano 1997, p. 227) is also becoming a historical relic. Japan's economy was restructured from manufacture based to technology and information based in the 1970 and Japanese women face problems similar to those of American women, who also live in a post-industrial society.

The most frequently occurring response regarding the life course selection for Guamanian (45.9%) and for Japanese (47.3%) women was that they would not give up their full-time job, even though they had a child (alternative 4). This result indicates the increase of women who would like to pursue occupational careers (not just working for living), even though there is still great pressure to marry and fulfill social obligation as a wife and mother. This result also indicates that one income is not enough to maintain a household as the times of high growth of Japanese economy is getting over. In practice, the interaction between occupational careers and life events is not so determinant to the contemporary women of Japan and Guam. The selected patterns of the life course (a path-way along which people live) for both groups are very similar (see Table 5). As stated previously, Chamorro women have to face a new challenge, not just to be a homemaker but to face the world as a bread winner (Souder 1992). As far as revealed by this study, the Guamanian (and Japanese) undergraduate women are facing the world and are willing to become a bread winner. At the same time, Guamanian and Japanese undergraduate women desire to archive their self-satisfaction through pursuing their occupational careers and earning their own income.

**Summary and Directions for the Future Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to determine relative importance of status aspirations and gender awareness of Guamanian and Japanese undergraduate women. Although the ranking of status aspirations for both groups of women is relatively similar, the magnitude of each of the

status aspirations is significantly different: Guamanian women aspire much higher than do Japanese women. There are, however, relatively similar patterns in gender awareness between the two groups of women, yet the magnitude of women's achievement factors is significantly different. However, there are no significant differences between Chamorro and non-Chamorro women in status aspirations and gender awareness (see Appendix B): thus patterns of thinking, behavior, and attitudes toward the occupational world are statistically the same. Guam has evolved into a multiethnic society. Are characteristics of women with different social and cultural backgrounds merged with native women of Guam through their social interactions and learning experiences on campus? This phenomenon should be further investigated. The secondary purpose was to determine the relationship of the life course selection with status aspirations: the correlations of the two variables are moderate for both groups. For Guamanian women such items as getting married in their 20's or early 30's and having their child are contributed to the life course selection, and for Japanese women such items as having a profitable job and becoming a mentor for the next generation are contributed to the selection. Based on the notion that Guamanian women are career-minded and Japanese women are home-minded, the above results are contradictory indeed.

A 7-point scale will yield more accurate results because the mean scores of the items measured on a 5-point scale for the two groups are so close to each other and it must be the limitation of the study. The second limitation is the validity of the instrument. Although the instrument was pilot tested, it might still not be as valid as a standardized one. The third is the exploratory nature of the study; this approach was taken to make single item comparisons rather than defining specific constructs with multiple item measures to investigate differences in aspirations and awareness. In the future study, these points should be considered to enhance validity, reliability, and practicality. This study is simply a first step in finding out more about women's desires, expectation, and gender awareness. Further research is necessary to expand upon the findings of this study since very little is known about Guamanian and Japanese women's status aspirations. Interviews were not conducted but it would be beneficial to combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Finally, an important direction for the future study is a better understanding of why and how women in Guam and Japan aspire higher academic and social goals not only from educational and sociological perspectives but also from psychological perspectives in women's lifespan theories.

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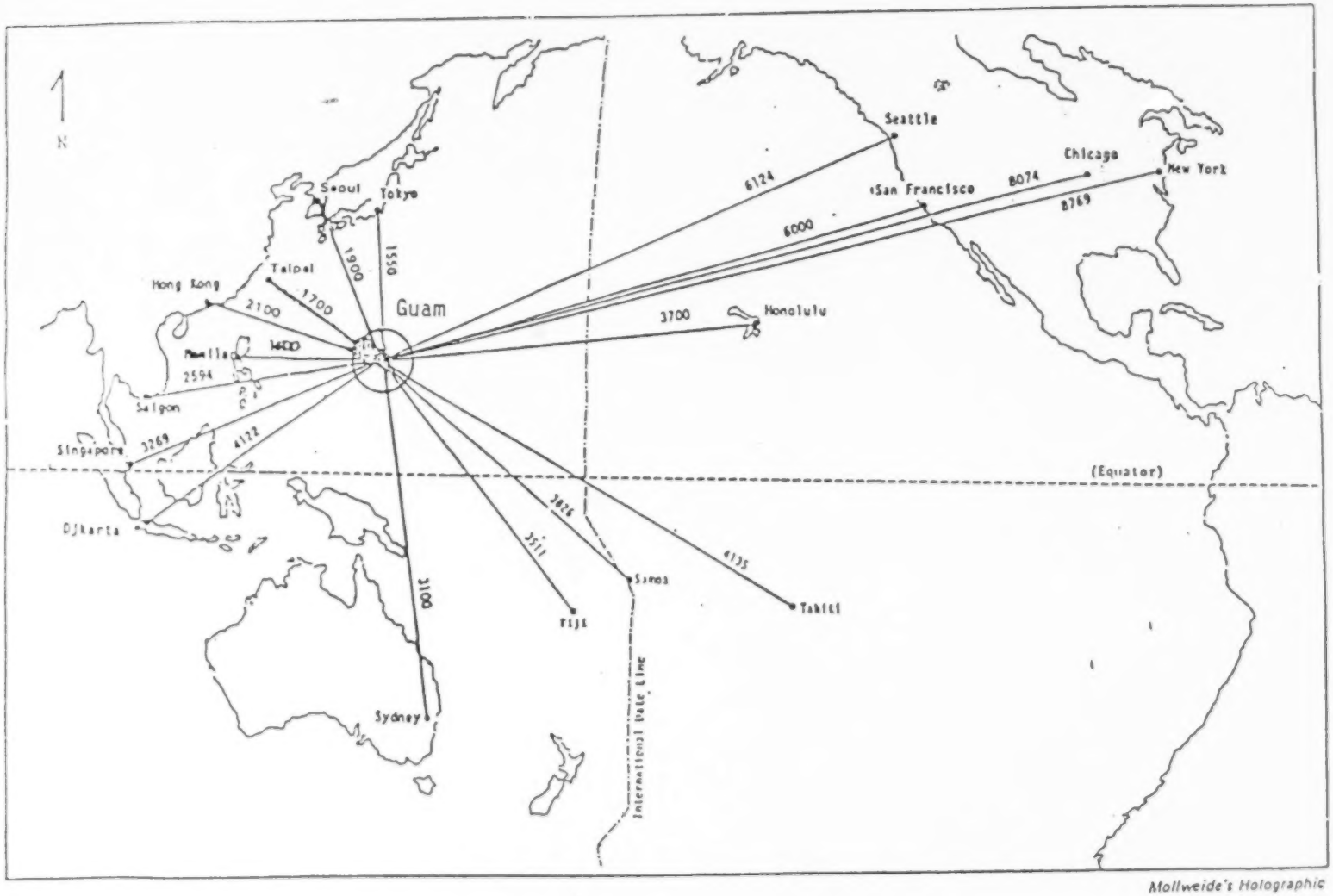


FIGURE 1. GUAM AND PACIFIC RIM DISTANCES

# Appendix B

**Aspiration Priorities: Chamorro Versus Non-Chamorro Women**

| *Chamorro women* Rank | Item | *Non-Chamorro women* Rank | Item |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | University graduation | 1 | University graduation |
| 2 | Financially independent | 2 | Financially independent |
| 3 | Achieving work satisfaction | 2 | Achieving work satisfaction |
| 4 | University graduation (for family) | 4 | University graduation (for family) |
| 5 | Having a child | 5 | Combining work and home |
| 5 | Contribution to society | 6 | Financially independent (for family) |
| 7 | Having a profitable job | 7 | Having career and family |
| 8 | Combining work and home | 8 | Having a profitable job |
| 8 | Having career and family | 9 | Having a child |
| 10 | Becoming a mentor | 10 | Contribution to society |

**A Comparison of Chamorro Versus Non-Chamorro Women in Gender Awareness**

| *Item* | *Chamorro* n = 49 M | SD | *Non-Chamorro* n = 62 M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q: They say that there is gender discrimination in the following areas of employment. What do you think? | | | | |
| Recruitment and selection | 3.63 | .91 | 3.81 | .94 |
| Placement | 3.57 | .84 | 3.76 | .90 |
| Job content | 3.51 | .98 | 3.58 | 1.03 |
| Training and education | 3.10 | 1.04 | 3.17 | 1.05 |
| Wages | 3.61 | 1.12 | 3.61 | 1.22 |
| Promotion | 3.65 | 1.03 | 3.61 | 1.25 |
| Retirement | 3.08 | .98 | 3.10 | 1.11 |
| Q: They say that the following are determinate factors for women to develop their work skills and get promotion at workplaces. What do you think? | | | | |
| Expansion of day-care centers and nursing homes | 3.78 | .99 | 3.68 | 1.29 |
| Driving off the view: Men at work, women at home | 3.86 | 1.24 | 3.48 | 1.53 |
| Advancement of child-care leave and reemployment systems for women | 4.04 | .84 | 3.81 | 1.14 |
| Improving equal-opportunity-employment in general | 4.35 | .81 | 4.45 | .86 |
| Men's understanding and cooperation at home and at work | 4.39 | .76 | 4.50 | .78 |
| Advancement of women's access to high status occupations | 4.34 | .81 | 4.29 | .93 |
| Improving educational opportunities for women in professional fields | 4.41 | .79 | 4.32 | 1.05 |
| Increasing women's work consciousness/the the importance of hard work | 4.14 | .89 | 4.26 | .96 |